



# Media framing on Bernama's Twitter coverage during Malaysia's GE15: An exploratory factor analysis

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## ABSTRACT

Integrating social media platforms like Twitter into election coverage has transformed information dissemination, making it important for political discourse. This study examines how Bernama, a government-linked news agency in Malaysia, used Twitter during Malaysia's 15th General Election (GE15), focusing on the role of media framing. Media framing is the intentional presentation of information aimed at influencing audience perceptions, significantly shaping voter attitudes, and constructing political narratives. A total of 1,103 tweets from Bernama were analysed through quantitative content analysis, and an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify key constructs, assess item quality, and evaluate construct validity. The findings reveal that most factors obtained Cronbach's Alpha values of between 0.5 and 0.9, demonstrating acceptable to excellent reliability. The study highlights two major challenges, which are media prejudice, where biased reporting influences public opinion, and media restrictions, which limit the depth and objectivity of coverage due to internal or external pressures. The findings demonstrate the transformative potential of Twitter in shaping political communication, emphasising the importance of media framing in constructing election narratives. The study's significance lies in its contribution to understanding how digital platforms influence democratic processes. It also provides practical implications for media practitioners by highlighting the need for transparent and unbiased reporting to promote informed voter engagement. Moreover, the findings serve as a foundation for future research on the role of social media in fostering equitable and democratic information dissemination in evolving media landscapes.

**Keywords:** *Media framing, election discourse, media narrative analysis, Twitter, exploratory factor analysis*

## INTRODUCTION

Journalism has undergone significant changes in the digital age, largely due to technological advancements that have transformed how news is created, shared, and consumed (Sultan & Amir, 2023). The era of handwritten newsletters is over; today, information spreads quickly through various online platforms, transforming communication. Social media, especially Twitter has become a powerful tool for political communication. It offers politicians a direct way to connect with voters, making it a key influence in shaping public discourse (Iman Anuar, 2025). In Malaysia, social media's role in political engagement has been particularly impactful, especially during elections. Twitter's ability to facilitate instant communication and rapidly spread information has made it vital in shaping election narratives and influencing public opinion.

During Malaysia's 14th General Election (GE14), Twitter played a key role in facilitating political discussions, allowing direct communication between politicians and voters. As the country prepared for the 15th General Election (GE15), the impact of social media on public discourse and electoral outcomes became even more significant, marking a crucial shift in Malaysia's political landscape. This change, largely driven by platforms like Twitter, highlights the power of social media in democratizing political communication. Twitter encourages real-time debates, amplifies diverse voices, and enables the fast spread of information, making it a powerful tool for shaping political narratives and promoting civic engagement (Halpern et al., 2017). This shift is especially important in Malaysia, where social media has become a primary means of raising political awareness and increasing participation, particularly among younger, tech-savvy voters. A key aspect of this digital shift is media framing, which significantly shapes how information is presented to the public. Media framing involves the use of specific angles, perspectives, and language in reporting, influencing how audiences interpret and emotionally react to the information. By emphasizing certain aspects of a story and downplaying others, media framing affects how people perceive political events and issues.

Moreover, during GE15, media framing on platforms like Twitter played a key role in shaping public opinion, influencing voter behaviour, and constructing the dominant election narrative. Taib and Vivian (2022) emphasised how Twitter created a participatory environment, where both political elites and ordinary citizens contributed to the narrative, leading to greater polarisation and fragmentation in political communication. Bernama, a leading government-linked news agency, was particularly influential in this process. By leveraging its Twitter presence, Bernama helped shape political discussions, frame key issues, and engage directly with the electorate. This study focuses on Bernama's role at the intersection of media framing and social media, exploring its impact on public discourse during GE15. It is particularly important in the Malaysian context for two reasons. First, it examines how Bernama used Twitter to influence public opinion and frame critical issues during a significant electoral period, offering valuable insights into the intersection of media, technology, and politics in Malaysia. Second, it highlights the challenges of media framing, such as bias and polarisation, which are crucial for understanding the complexities of Malaysia's socio-political landscape.

Throughout GE15, Malaysian voters experienced a surge in political awareness and participation, largely boosted by the widespread use of social media. Twitter emerged as a crucial platform for political discourse, allowing for dynamic exchanges of ideas and

rapid news dissemination (Delli Carpini, 2000). Media framing was central to shaping public opinion during this election, influencing both the narrative of the election and the broader political discourse (Aalberg et al., 2012). Political communication is considered as critical in a democracy for the development of a society in which the country and its citizens have a sense of belonging (Sern & Zainuddin, 2014). Journalistic integrity plays a key role in shaping foreign perceptions, reinforcing the importance of unbiased reporting to maintain Malaysia's standing on the world stage. In Malaysia, the media framing during GE15 faced analysis for potential bias, which contributed to polarisation and division within the country. The rapid spread of diverse narratives on social media further complicated the media framing process, shaping public discourse in new and complex ways. As a major news agency, Bernama played an important role in framing issues and influencing public opinion. Its active presence on Twitter allowed the agency to directly engage with a broad audience, framing issues in ways that shaped the electoral conversation.

The media framing of Malaysia's GE15 demonstrates both continuities and shifts from the previous GE14. In GE14, the focus was primarily on issues of governance, corruption and the promise of institutional reforms. This was evident in the way mainstream and alternative media approached their narratives, with platforms such as *The Star* and *Free Malaysia Today* offering contrasting perspectives—traditional versus progressive. Traditional outlets leaned towards a cautious, state-influenced narrative, while independent platforms like FMT provided more outspoken critiques of corruption and abuse of power, resonating with the broader calls for reform. In GE15, however, the media landscape evolved to encompass a more fragmented and polarised discourse. The emergence of identity politics and coalition-building significantly shaped media narratives. Unlike GE14, where narratives focused on a binary opposition between the ruling coalition and opposition, GE15 witnessed a hung parliament and the rise of multiple political blocs, including the Islamic party PAS, which capitalised on religious sentiments to sway voter preferences.

This shift was reflected in how different media platforms framed the election—mainstream media focused on political instability and coalition negotiations, while social media became a powerful battleground where participatory propaganda thrived. On Twitter, for example, the use of hashtags and user-generated content shaped public opinion dynamically, reflecting broader national sentiments and increasing political engagement (Asmolov, 2019). Moreover, the role of digital platforms in GE15 exemplified a move towards decentralized media, where influencers and ordinary users played significant roles in shaping the narrative. Unlike GE14, where traditional media maintained significant control over discourse, GE15 saw social media platforms like Twitter and TikTok become primary spaces for political discourse. These platforms facilitated a diverse range of voices, often engaging in identity-based politics and economic concerns, reflecting the complexities of a post-COVID-19 political climate (Rambukkana, 2015).

Additionally, media framing during GE15 placed more emphasis on coalition-building and voter sentiments around political instability, as no single party secured a majority, necessitating cross-party negotiations. This was evident in studies examining online media coverage, which demonstrated how different media outlets like *The Star* and *Free Malaysia Today* catered to distinct voter demographics, tailoring their messages to reflect either establishment views or more progressive, reformist perspectives.

Thus, the relationship between social media, media framing, and public diplomacy significantly influenced political discourse and public opinion during Malaysia's elections. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for analysing election outcomes and developing effective communication strategies in the digital age. GE15 not only marked a transformative moment for Malaysia, but also underscored the essential role of media—particularly platforms like Twitter—in shaping democratic dialogue (Chinnasamy & Roslan, 2015).

Recent technological advancements have enabled society to create and share news, allowing individuals to document and broadcast events in real time using smartphones and social media. Bernama's active involvement in framing issues and disseminating information highlights its centrality in Malaysia's media landscape. By contributing to the democratic process of GE15, Bernama underscored the significance of media in shaping public opinion and influencing the political landscape in this critical electoral period. This study stands out for its innovative approach in examining the intersection of media framing, social media, and political discourse during Malaysia's GE15. The use of Bernama's active role on Twitter offers a novel perspective on how a major government-linked news agency engages with digital platforms to influence public opinion. Unlike traditional analyses that focus primarily on content published in mainstream media, this research explores the dynamics of media framing through real-time interactions and participatory narratives that shape election discourse.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides key insights that guide the study's research questions and methodology, particularly in understanding the impact of social media on political discourse and electoral outcomes. The review emphasises the growing influence of platforms like Twitter, which have become essential tools for shaping voter sentiment, especially during critical elections like GE14 and GE15. Scholars highlight how social media, particularly Twitter, transformed political communication by enabling direct engagement between politicians and voters, thus shaping public opinion. This informs the study's primary research question regarding how social media influenced public opinion and electoral outcomes during GE15, with a focus on the role of media framing in this process.

Additionally, the literature on media framing provides a theoretical foundation for analysing how political messages are constructed and communicated. Studies on framing techniques underscore the role of media in shaping public perception, especially during elections. This is central to the study's secondary research question, which examines the framing techniques used by political parties and media outlets during GE15. The literature suggests that content analysis is an effective methodology for identifying and categorising the frames used in tweets and political messages, helping the study explore the different narratives that shaped voter perceptions and influenced political discourse.

The literature highlights the use of comparative media analysis and sentiment analysis to assess how traditional and new media outlets influenced both domestic and international audiences. The literature provides a comprehensive framework for the study's research questions and supports the selection of methodologies that will explore

the intricate dynamics of social media, media framing, and public diplomacy in the Malaysian electoral context.

### *Social media and Malaysian politics*

The political landscape of Malaysia has undergone a significant transformation due to the rise and advancement of social media platforms. These platforms have shaped political engagement by influencing individuals both directly and through their social networks, including posts by politicians they follow, and opinions shared by their peers (Hassim et al., 2020). An important moment in this shift occurred during the 2008 General Election (GE12), which marked the rise of social media as a powerful force in Malaysian political discourse. Before GE12, social media platforms were relatively inactive but they quickly became dynamic outlets for political expression and information sharing. Muniandy and Muniandy (2013) as well as Willnat et al. (2013) emphasised the significant role of blogs, social networking sites, and online forums in fostering political dialogue and citizen engagement. GE12 marked the beginning of internet-based political communication, with both traditional and new media playing critical roles.

During GE13, social media's influence was nurtured significantly, especially among young, urban voters (Sern & Zanuuddin, 2014). This shift became even more pronounced in the 2018 General Election (GE14), when Pakatan Harapan (PH) secured a historic victory over Barisan Nasional (BN), marking a major political transformation in Malaysia. Social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp became fundamental tools for political mobilisation (Vermeer et al., 2020), with the rise of smartphones and broader internet access further fuelling online political discourse. The election campaign demonstrated the strategic use of social media to reshape traditional campaigning methods (Noviani et al., 2019). GE14 marked the end of six decades of BN coalition rule, with PH's successful social media campaign, particularly on Twitter, playing a critical role in influencing political discussions and voter behaviour. Despite concerns about misinformation, political leaders increasingly embraced social media as their primary communication channel.

Twitter's influence reached far beyond Malaysia, with politicians, journalists, and the public all using the platform to engage in political discourse (Noviani et al., 2019). Its importance became evident during GE12 when the opposition effectively used social media to challenge the ruling BN coalition's dominance. In the subsequent elections, particularly GE13 and GE14, social media—especially Twitter—played a central role in shaping the outcome. The success of the PH coalition in GE14 showed how powerful Twitter was in influencing voter sentiment. Although there are ongoing debates about the accuracy and reliability of information on social media, Twitter remains a crucial tool for political discourse. Understanding its role during elections requires examining how political events, user characteristics, and the platform's design interact (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016).

Furthermore, social media continued to evolve as a force in shaping electoral outcomes in GE12 and GE13. Platforms like blogs, YouTube, and Facebook pages empowered opposition voices and facilitated political discussion. GE15, held in November 2022, marked a significant turning point in Malaysia's electoral history. The emergence of multiple political coalitions, along with the aftermath of GE14, added complexity to the political landscape. GE15 highlighted the ever-changing nature of Malaysian politics,

underlining the necessity for political parties to adapt and innovate to stay relevant. With traditional power structures facing new challenges, parties must take advantage of shifting demographics and new communication channels to remain competitive in an increasingly dynamic political environment.

### *Media framing*

Media framing plays a critical role in shaping public perception across various domains, such as politics, social issues and economics. For media users, understanding how framing works is essential for critically evaluating information and forming well-informed opinions. Iyengar (1991) distinguished between episodic and thematic frames, two fundamental approaches that influence how events are presented to the audience. Similarly, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified five core news frames—responsibility, human interest, conflict, morality and economic consequences—that significantly shape audience responses. This highlights the need for refining frame codebooks to capture the complexity and subtleties of media framing in research.

Building on this foundation, Tankard's (2001) frame listing method categorises content into specific and generic issue frames, providing a detailed approach for analysing framing practices. Druckman (2004) highlighted the power of framing in selecting particular aspects of reality to present, thereby influencing how the audience perceives and understands an issue. Matthes and Kohring (2008) expanded on this by outlining the key components of framing: problem characterisation, causal interpretation, evaluation and recovery recommendations. They argued that frames act as symbolic tools that organise and simplify complex issues, helping audiences navigate and comprehend global events. Thus, understanding these framing techniques is essential for media consumers, enabling them to make sense of modern media and form informed perspectives on the world.

In addition to these theoretical insights, media framing has a significant impact on public opinion during political events, such as Malaysian elections. In this context, media framing shapes how election issues and candidates are perceived, making it crucial to analyse these frames to understand their effects on public diplomacy and election outcomes. The selection of frames in news stories is often driven by the need to convey powerful messages or reinforce particular narratives. Exploring the frame-building process is essential, especially in examining how specific perspectives, such as the portrayal of women in politics, are framed (Rajaratnam et al., 2020). In the broader context of international relations, public diplomacy plays an increasingly important role, particularly during elections, as it directly influences Malaysia's image and foreign relations.

Moreover, the role of social media during Malaysia's 15th General Election (GE15) adds another layer of complexity to media framing. Social media has accelerated the dissemination of diverse narratives, contributing to the shaping of political discourse (Taib & Vivian, 2022). Scholars have studied how traditional and social media interact to influence public opinion and political dynamics. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become key tools in public diplomacy, enabling direct engagement with foreign audiences. This study, therefore, seeks to assess social media's impact on public diplomacy and identify strategies employed in this digital environment. The portrayal of Malaysia in the media also significantly affects foreign perceptions, raising concerns about the integrity of journalism on social media platforms. Thus, understanding the relationship

between framing, trust, and perceptions of truth is essential, particularly in how news was processed on social media during GE15.

## METHODOLOGY

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical technique used to identify the underlying structure within a dataset by grouping variables into dimensions based on their relationships. This approach simplifies complex datasets by reducing the number of variables into more interpretable dimensions, enabling researchers to better analyse patterns and relationships (Watkins, 2018). In media research, EFA is especially useful for examining how information is organised and conveyed on dynamic platforms like Twitter, where the content is continually evolving. EFA allows researchers to explore dimensions such as political polarisation, governance, and sentiment analysis, which shape how content is framed during specific events, such as elections or politically sensitive situations.

By applying EFA, researchers can examine the underlying constructs affecting media framing, offering a deeper understanding of how social media platforms influence the spread of information and impact public discourse. In studies of media framing on Twitter, Cronbach's Alpha is used alongside EFA to assess the reliability of these dimensions. For example, Ahmad et al. (2021) utilised both Cronbach's Alpha and EFA to evaluate the consistency of variables such as hashtags, emotional tone, and topic relevance during Malaysia's 15th General Election (GE15). This approach confirmed that media framing on Twitter consists of multiple interconnected dimensions, with a high Cronbach's Alpha value indicating robust and reliable framing constructs.

The quantitative content analysis conducted in this study involved converting unstructured data into quantifiable data points. This approach, as highlighted by Snelson (2016), allows for a systematic exploration of patterns, trends and relationships. By categorising variables based on frequency and associations, researchers enhanced the reliability and validity of their findings. Before conducting the reliability test among coders, the researcher analysed the items used to measure news frames. This step was essential for reducing and organising a large dataset into specific constructs aligned with the dependent variables of the research. The aim was to ensure a coherent categorisation of tweets, making it easier to understand how media framing influences public opinion. In contrast to traditional media like print and television, social media platforms like Twitter present unique challenges, including brevity in communication and rapid dissemination of information. These factors often require adjustments during factor rotation to ensure that frames are categorised effectively. This method ensures that frames remain relevant and appropriately reflect the nature of social media content, where hashtags, emotional engagement, and political narratives play critical roles in shaping perceptions.

To facilitate this process, the researcher developed a detailed coding scheme with seven categories: news frame, issues, news tone, news source, commentary, news slant, and Twitter post perspective. These categories provided a structured approach to systematically analyse the data. The coding process began with the creation of a coding book and coding sheets. The coding book defined each category and provided guidelines on how to classify various aspects of tweets, ensuring consistency and clarity in the categorisation. After establishing the coding framework, a pilot test was conducted to identify ambiguities or

inconsistencies. Based on the pilot test, a reliability test was then performed to measure the agreement level between two independent coders.

The reliability scores were exceptionally high, exceeding 0.8 for all main categories, indicating that the coding process was both consistent and reliable. This step ensured that measurement errors were minimised, and the results reflected accurate and robust data. Through EFA and reliability testing, this study maintained strong internal validity and ensured the credibility of the findings. By systematically categorising variables and ensuring coder agreement, researchers could effectively explore media framing dimensions on platforms like Twitter, gaining insights into how political and social narratives are shaped. The findings were validated by these high reliability scores, as shown in Table 1, confirming that the data used in the analysis were robust and trustworthy. These methodological steps ensured the study's internal validity, reinforcing the credibility of the results.

**Table 1.** Inter-coder reliability in analysing Bernama's Twitter coverage of Malaysia's 15th Election

| No | Category      | Coder A & Coder B |
|----|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. | News Source   | 0.99              |
| 2. | News Frame    | 0.98              |
| 3. | Commentary    | 0.98              |
| 4. | News Tone     | 0.96              |
| 5. | Issue Context | 0.95              |
| 6. | Twitter Post  | 0.95              |
| 7. | News Slant    | 0.72              |

Table 1 presents the inter-coder reliability in analysing Bernama's Twitter coverage of Malaysia's GE15. The analysis focused on various dimensions such as news frame, issue context, news tone, and news source, with high reliability scores reflecting consistent agreement between two coders (Coder A and Coder B). The inter-coder reliability analysis of Bernama's Twitter coverage of Malaysia's 15th Election revealed a high degree of consistency between coders in most categories, reflecting the clarity of the coding scheme and the ease with which certain aspects of the coverage can be categorised. The categories with the highest levels of agreement were News Source, News Frame, and Commentary, all of which achieved reliability scores of 0.99, 0.98 and 0.98, respectively. These results indicate that the coders were able to consistently identify the source of the news, the framing of the content and distinguish between objective reporting and subjective commentary. Such high reliability suggests that these elements were definite in the context of Bernama's coverage.

The consistency in categorising News Tone (0.96) and Issue Context (0.95) also highlights the reliability of the coding process. Both categories, while slightly lower than the top-performing categories, still reflect strong agreement between the coders. This suggests that while there may have been some detailed differences in interpreting the tone of the posts and the context in which issues were framed, these categories were still relatively straightforward to classify. The fact that coders agreed on how issues were contextualised in the election coverage shows that the framing of political content was

clear and distinguishable. In contrast, the Twitter Post category, with a reliability score of 0.95, also showed strong consistency. This suggests that the tweets were easy to categorise, likely because they were all from a singular, well-defined source, Bernama. The uniformity of the data set, composed exclusively of tweets from a reputable news organisation, likely contributed to the high level of agreement between coders. However, this category's reliability could also be seen as a reflection of the standardised format of Twitter posts, which provides a clear structure that is easily identifiable.

The most notable outlier in the analysis was News Slant, which achieved a much lower reliability score of 0.72. This indicates a more subjective element in the coding process, as coders appeared to struggle to agree on the presence and direction of bias or slant in the coverage. The lower score suggests that the concept of slant may be more difficult to define clearly, as it involves a deeper interpretation of the news coverage, potentially influenced by personal or cultural biases. This finding highlights the need for refining the definitions and examples used in coding for news slant, as well as further training for coders to ensure more consistent interpretations.

## FINDINGS

For three months, a total of 1,103 tweets were collected from Bernama's Twitter account using the hashtag #PRU15Bernama, covering three distinct phases of the election: before, during and after the election. The majority of these tweets were posted before the election, with 880 tweets, making up 79.8% of the total sample. This reflects Bernama's active role in shaping the pre-election political discourse, where the focus was likely on informing the public, presenting key political narratives, and engaging with voters as the election approached. The high frequency of tweets before the election also suggests that Bernama aimed to play a significant role in setting the stage for electoral decisions and guiding discussions around political candidates, parties, and key issues. In contrast, only 24 tweets, or 2.2% of the total were posted during the election itself. This smaller proportion can likely be attributed to the restrictions around media coverage on election days, where media agencies often adopt a more restrained approach, focusing on real-time reporting, live updates and logistical information. Bernama's limited presence during the election suggests that its content strategy shifted to comply with electoral regulations and focused on ensuring accurate, transparent, and timely information during the critical period of voting.

After the election, Bernama posted 199 tweets, representing 18% of the total collected. This phase marked a shift towards post-election analysis, where the focus was on reporting the election results, reactions from political leaders, and the political consequences of the election outcome. Bernama likely used this phase to help shape public understanding of the election's implications, covering government formation, political negotiations, and responses from both domestic and international stakeholders. The distribution of tweets across the three phases highlights Bernama's adaptive communication strategy, with a strong emphasis on pre-election engagement, a cautious approach during the election and a reflective, results-focused communication strategy in the aftermath.

**Table 2.** Frequency and percentage of tweets by Bernama across three phases in analysing Bernama's Twitter coverage of Malaysia's 15th Election

| Phase        | Time Frame  | Date                                          | Frequency    | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1.           | Before GE15 | 12 <sup>th</sup> October – 18 November 2022   | 880          | 79.8           |
| 2.           | During GE15 | 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2022                | 24           | 2.2            |
| 3.           | After GE15  | 20 <sup>th</sup> November – 7th December 2022 | 199          | 18             |
| <b>Total</b> |             |                                               | <b>1,103</b> | <b>100</b>     |

To analyse the use of frames in Bernama's Twitter posts, this research adopted the five generic frames outlined by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). These frames which served as variables in the study provide a structured method to understand how issues are presented to the audience. The analysis of the tweets revealed how different framing techniques were used to shape the narrative and influence public perception. Table 3 presents the distribution of frame attributes across all tweet displays, offering a clear picture of how Bernama employed various framing strategies throughout the election period. The human-interest frame, which focuses on narratives that highlight the personal or emotional involvement of individuals and groups with a particular issue, was the most prevalent in Bernama's tweets. This frame was present in 87.8% of the tweets, totalling 924 occurrences. The dominance of the human-interest frame suggests that Bernama prioritised engaging the audience by focusing on personal stories and human experiences related to political issues.

This approach can help humanise complex political events, making them more relatable and emotionally engaging for the audience, which is crucial in shaping public sentiment and fostering voter engagement. The responsibility frame, which assigns responsibility to specific individuals, organisations, or levels of government for addressing an issue, was also widely used but less frequent than the human-interest frame. It appeared in 52.1% of the tweets, accounting for 548 occurrences. This frame likely served to highlight the role of various political figures, parties, or institutions in resolving key issues, which could help clarify the political stakes for the audience. By assigning accountability, the responsibility frame can guide public perception of who is responsible for certain outcomes, thereby influencing voter behaviour and political discourse. By using these frames, Bernama effectively shaped the narrative around the election, steering the public's understanding of political events and reinforcing its influence over the discourse.

**Table 3.** Frequency and percentage for frame attribute statements

| Framing               | Attribute Item                                                                                                                            | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Human Interest</b> | 1. A narrative that gives an example of a human being or a human face on an issue.                                                        | 716       | 68.1           |
|                       | 2. Narratives that use adjectives or personal backgrounds that generate feelings of anger, empathy, compassion, sympathy, and compassion. | 235       | 22.3           |
|                       | 3. A narrative that emphasises how individuals and groups are involved with an issue or problem.                                          | 924       | 87.8           |
|                       | 4. A narrative that takes place directly in one's personal life.                                                                          | 152       | 14.4           |
|                       | 5. The narrative contains visual information that may generate feelings of anger, empathy, affection, sympathy, or compassion.            | 220       | 20.9           |

**Table 3. (con't)**

| <b>Framing</b>               | <b>Attribute Item</b>                                                                                                                      | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Responsibility</b>        | 1. These narrative states that there are several levels of government or organisation that have a responsibility to alleviate the problem. | 28               | 2.7                   |
|                              | 2. These narrative states that there are several levels of government or organisation responsible for an issue or problem.                 | 548              | 52.1                  |
|                              | 3. This narrative suggests a solution to an issue or problem.                                                                              | 175              | 16.6                  |
|                              | 4. This narrative suggests that an individual or group in society is responsible for an issue or problem.                                  | 233              | 22.1                  |
|                              | 5. This narrative suggests that immediate action should be taken on the problem.                                                           | 30               | 2.9                   |
| <b>Conflict</b>              | 1. This narrative reflects disagreements between various parties or parties, individuals, groups, or countries                             | 55               | 5.2                   |
|                              | 2. A parties, individuals, groups, or nations that criticize each other.                                                                   | 25               | 2.4                   |
|                              | 3. A narrative that refers to two or more sides of an issue or problem.                                                                    | 58               | 5.5                   |
|                              | 4. A narrative that refers to the winning party or the losing party.                                                                       | 8                | 0.8                   |
| <b>Morality</b>              | 1. A narrative that contains any moral message.                                                                                            | 18               | 1.7                   |
|                              | 2. This narrative refers to morality, divinity, and the pillars of other religions.                                                        | 15               | 1.4                   |
|                              | 3. Narrative that offers specific social direction on how to act.                                                                          | 20               | 1.9                   |
| <b>Economic Consequences</b> | 1. There is mention of loss or profit (financial) in the present or future.                                                                | 5                | 0.5                   |
|                              | 2. There is mention of the cost or level of expenditure involved.                                                                          | 5                | 0.5                   |
|                              | 3. There are references to economic effects whether following or not following the course of action.                                       | 19               | 1.8                   |

To ensure the reliability of the measures used in the study, Cronbach's alpha was applied as an assessment tool. This statistical method helps determine the internal consistency of the instrument, essentially measuring how reliably the scale captures the concept under investigation. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.00 to 1.00, with higher values indicating stronger reliability. In this study, Cronbach's alpha values were used to evaluate the reliability of five different news framing scales, which were crucial in assessing how consistently Bernama's tweets aligned with each frame. The analysis, as shown in Table 4, provides valuable insights into the stability of these scales across the tweets collected during the study.

The results from the pilot test indicate varying levels of reliability among the different framing scales. The morality frame achieved an excellent Cronbach's alpha value of 0.909, which is considered very strong, indicating that the items related to this frame were highly consistent in measuring the intended concept. This suggests that the morality frame in the dataset was reliable and stable across different observations. On the other hand, the conflict frame had a solid Cronbach's alpha of 0.754, which is generally regarded as acceptable and indicates good consistency. These two frames demonstrate the

effectiveness of the measures used for these constructs. Meanwhile, the human-interest frame scored a moderate Cronbach's alpha of 0.676, reflecting reasonable consistency, though slightly lower than the previous two frames. The economic consequences frame achieved a satisfactory score of 0.571, suggesting moderate reliability, but with room for improvement. Lastly, the responsibility frame had the lowest Cronbach's alpha of 0.507. While this still falls within the acceptable range (0.5 to 0.7), it indicates the lowest level of internal consistency among the frames. According to Hinton et al. (2004), a Cronbach's alpha in this range is typically interpreted as showing moderate reliability. These findings, which were obtained after performing the exploratory factor analysis, reflect the varying levels of reliability across the different frames and provide an understanding of how well each framing scale functioned in measuring the intended concepts during the study.

**Table 4.** Reliability analysis for media frame in Bernama's Twitter coverage of Malaysia's 15th Election

| Variables                   | No of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Morality Frame              | 3           | 0.909            |
| Conflict Frame              | 3           | 0.754            |
| Human Interest              | 3           | 0.676            |
| Economic Consequences Frame | 3           | 0.571            |
| Responsibility Frame        | 4           | 0.507            |

Before conducting the reliability test among coders, the researchers first analysed the items intended for measuring news frames. This step aimed to organise a large number of items into a specific construct under one dependent variable. Although a similar test had been conducted in previous research on print and television media in Europe, the researcher opted to perform it again due to the unique context and medium of tweets. The factor analysis was crucial in identifying common factors influencing the observed variables and reducing the complexity of the data (Watkins, 2018). It enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying constructs or dimensions being measured. Factor analysis involves exploring the data to determine the number of factors needed to represent the research data effectively.

This analysis considered various criteria, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, item load, eigenvalues, and the percentage of variance (Hair et al., 2006). The KMO test assessed whether the items were suitable for factor analysis, indicating a KMO value of 0.679, which suggests that the data was suitable. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed significant correlations among the items, supporting the adequacy of item correlations for factor analysis. Factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted, and seven components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted. This approach is commonly used in research to simplify complex data by identifying underlying factors that contribute to the variance in the dataset (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2013). By using varimax rotation, the factors are made more interpretable, aiding in the identification of distinct dimensions that contribute meaningfully to the study.

The eigenvalues represent the amount of variance captured by each factor, with

higher values indicating greater significance. In this dataset, the first eigenvalue is 2.943, followed by 2.546, 1.952, 1.647, and 1.444, suggesting that the first two factors explain the most variance. Correspondingly, the percentages of varimax explained reveal the proportion of total variance accounted for by each factor, with the first two factors explaining 13.182% and 11.197% respectively, while the subsequent factors account for diminishing percentages of variance. These findings indicate that the first two factors are the most influential in explaining the underlying structure of the data, suggesting they should be prioritised in further analyses or interpretations. Items with factor loadings below 0.30 were excluded to maintain strong internal validity, resulting in modifications to the number of items in the human-interest and responsibility frame constructs, with 17 out of the initial 20 items retained for assessing Twitter news frames related to GE15 updates at Bernama. These findings emphasise the prioritisation of the first two factors in further analyses or interpretations.

**Table 5.** Factor loading for media frames following the principal component analysis

| Framing Factor                                                                                                                         |      | Factor |      |   |    |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|------|---|----|--|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.679                                                                                |      |        |      |   |    |  |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity; df = 190, p = 0.00                                                                                      |      |        |      |   |    |  |
|                                                                                                                                        | M    | HI     | C    | R | EC |  |
| Framing Item                                                                                                                           | 1    | 2      | 3    | 4 | 5  |  |
| Morality (M)                                                                                                                           |      |        |      |   |    |  |
| A narrative that contains any moral message.                                                                                           | .899 |        |      |   |    |  |
| This narrative refers to morality, divinity, and the pillars of other religions.                                                       | .863 |        |      |   |    |  |
| Narrative that offers specific social direction on how to act.                                                                         | .856 |        |      |   |    |  |
| Human Interest (HI)                                                                                                                    |      |        |      |   |    |  |
| A narrative that gives an example of a human being or a human face on an issue.                                                        |      | .399   |      |   |    |  |
| Narratives that use adjectives or personal backgrounds that generate feelings of anger, empathy, compassion, sympathy, and compassion. |      | .927   |      |   |    |  |
| A narrative that emphasises how individuals and groups are involved with an issue or problem.                                          |      |        |      |   |    |  |
| A narrative that takes place directly in one's personal life.                                                                          |      |        |      |   |    |  |
| The narrative contains visual information that may generate feelings of anger, empathy, affection, sympathy, or compassion.            |      | .884   |      |   |    |  |
| Conflict (C)                                                                                                                           |      |        |      |   |    |  |
| This narrative reflects disagreements between various parties or parties, individuals, groups, or countries.                           |      |        | .759 |   |    |  |
| A parties, individuals, groups, or nations that criticize each other.                                                                  |      |        | .527 |   |    |  |
| A narrative that refers to two or more sides of an issue or problem.                                                                   |      |        | .828 |   |    |  |
| A narrative that refers to the winning party or the losing party.                                                                      |      |        |      |   |    |  |

**Table 5. (con't)**

| <b>Framing Factor</b><br><b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.679</b><br><b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity; df = 190, p = 0.00</b> |          |           |          |          |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
|                                                                                                                                                     | <b>M</b> | <b>HI</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>R</b> | <b>EC</b> |
| <b>Framing Item</b>                                                                                                                                 | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Responsibility (R)</b>                                                                                                                           |          |           |          |          |           |
| These narrative states that there are several levels of government or organization that have a responsibility to alleviate the problem.             |          |           |          | .368     |           |
| These narrative states that there are several levels of government or organization responsible for an issue or problem.                             |          |           |          | .533     |           |
| This narrative suggests a solution to an issue or problem.                                                                                          |          |           |          | .609     |           |
| This narrative suggests that an individual or group in society is responsible for an issue or problem.                                              |          |           |          | .446     |           |
| This narrative suggests that immediate action should be taken on the problem.                                                                       |          |           |          |          |           |
| <b>Economic Consequences (EC)</b>                                                                                                                   |          |           |          |          |           |
| There is mention of loss or profit (financial) in the present or future.                                                                            |          |           |          |          | .484      |
| There is mention of the cost or level of expenditure involved.                                                                                      |          |           |          |          | .479      |
| There are references to economic effects whether following or not following the course of action.                                                   |          |           |          |          | .823      |

## CONCLUSION

The research findings provide valuable insights into Bernama's use of Twitter during Malaysia's 15th General Election, revealing how the news agency strategically framed political discourse to engage the public. The study based on over 1,103 tweets collected over three months, highlights key patterns in tweet frequency and timing. Particularly, the majority of tweets were posted before the election, suggesting a high level of engagement and anticipation in the lead-up to the electoral event. This emphasises the importance of timing in political communication and demonstrates how news agencies can influence public discourse by shaping the narrative well in advance of an election.

By exploring the content of these tweets, the study uncovers the framing strategies employed by Bernama, with a particular focus on the human-interest and responsibility frames. The dominance of the human-interest frame, which emphasises the involvement of individuals and groups in political issues, indicates a concerted effort to connect with audiences on a personal level, thereby humanising the election process. This strategy is likely to foster a deeper emotional connection with voters, making the issues at stake more relatable. The prominence of the responsibility frame, on the other hand, suggests an emphasis on accountability and the attribution of responsibility for political outcomes, an important aspect of shaping public opinion and ensuring that political actors are held accountable for their actions.

The reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha enhances confidence in the study's

findings by demonstrating the stability and consistency of the framing measures employed. The high-reliability coefficients for most of the frames suggest that the results are both robust and trustworthy. The lower Cronbach's Alpha scores for some frames, such as the responsibility frame (0.507), raise concerns about reliability. According to Hair et al. (2006), a Cronbach's Alpha score below 0.60 indicates low reliability, suggesting that the scale may not consistently measure the intended construct. Meanwhile, Taber (2018) mentioned alpha values were reasonable (0.67–0.87) and acceptable (0.45–0.98). In this context, the responsibility frame's low reliability may stem from inconsistencies in how items are measured or the variability in responses related to the accountability of political figures and institutions. These findings point to the need for further refinement of the items used to assess the responsibility frame to improve its consistency and reliability.

Additionally, EFA enriches the analysis by identifying the underlying dimensions or factors contributing to the variation in framing patterns. Through EFA, the study refines our understanding of how different framing elements interact and influence political discourse. By extracting relevant factors and adjusting frame constructs based on factor loadings, the analysis provides a deeper understanding of how framing strategies shape overall political narratives. These combined insights are crucial for understanding the dynamics of political communication in the digital age and will guide future studies on media framing. To explore Bernama's Twitter coverage of Malaysia's GE15 (#PRU15Bernama), EFA was employed to examine the underlying dimensions influencing media framing. By utilising the principal component method and applying varimax rotation, seven distinct factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted.

This method is widely used to simplify complex data and identify significant dimensions that explain the variance within the dataset (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2013). The results show that the first two factors accounted for a substantial proportion of the total variance (13.182% and 11.197%, respectively), highlighting their importance in shaping the underlying structure of the data. These findings align with established media framing theories, which emphasise how specific dimensions, such as human interest and responsibility frames, play a crucial role in guiding public perception and influencing political communication (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). By focusing on these factors, Bernama effectively shaped election narratives and engaged with its audience, reflecting the strategic use of framing in political discourse.

The findings of this research are not only crucial for understanding Bernama's role in shaping public discourse during the election but also offer significant implications for future election coverage and framing studies. Journalists, policymakers, and researchers can draw upon these insights to better understand how framing strategies influence political narratives and voter perceptions. By paying closer attention to timing, content, and the use of framing, future election coverage can be more strategically designed to engage voters, enhance political dialogue, and foster a more informed electorate. Additionally, this study provides a foundation for future research on media framing, offering a methodological framework that can be applied to other contexts and elections.

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